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AN EVALUATION OF SOVIET INTENTIONS AND PURPOSES
at the ADMINISTRATIVE RADIO CONFERENCE
GENEVA
(as of 14 September 1959)

INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Delegation's assurances of cooperation and the current aura of good will have prompted an examination and evaluation of the USSR's relationship to the international community in the field of telecommunications, in general, and to the specific issues thus far raised at this Conference.

This analysis has attempted to develop an understanding of Soviet objectives, motivation and actions by placing the Conference issues against a backdrop of those geographical, political, and philosophical factors pertinent to telecommunications on the national and international scenes. From this evaluation it is believed that the nature of the conflict between the US and USSR interests can be better appreciated and strategy requirements identified. Some suggestions for counteractions are included in the discussion.

SUMMARY

The Soviet proposals and positions are designed A) to promote specific and positive interests of the USSR or B) in a negative vein, to support those proposals or take positions which may be to the disadvantage of the West and which, at the same time, may gain goodwill for the Soviet Union. The most significant Soviet positions are as follows:

The USSR:

1. Proposes an adjustment of the (R) and (OR) aeronautical bands to accommodate Soviet international civil aviation.
2. Opposes specific allocations for space exploration.
3. Opposes the US concept of separate allocations for radio positioning.

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4. Favors widening the high frequency broadcast bands at the expense of the fixed service.
5. Proposes to reduce significantly the effectiveness of the IFRB and, thereby, steps towards international frequency management.

Thus far, 1) above appears to be the only objective in Category A. As evidence which will be developed later in this report will demonstrate, provision for the extension of the international civil aviation routes to serve the emerging Soviet international civil air fleet is of major importance to the Soviet Union. The US may expect to bargain most effectively and most forcefully on this objective.

Each of the enumerated basic positions of the USSR is discussed and evaluated in the following five sections. Before any of these specific factors are considered individually, however, it is necessary to examine the geo-political considerations germane to all of these issues.

THE UNIQUE POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE SOVBLOC.

The significance of the political structure and the geographic size and position of the Soviet Union in relation to the aspirations of this Conference cannot be overlooked. Approximately one-fourth of the world's land area is under the direct, or nearly-direct, control of Moscow. This land lies in one continuous mass. Another significant factor is that outside of this land mass, there are no other geographic areas of direct concern to the USSR. The USSR has neither allies nor military bases at distant parts of the world. There are no economic holdings or facilities, owned by Soviet interests, outside of their own Iron Curtain Bloc.

By contrast, the US and other major powers, such as the UK and France, are separated from their territorial possessions, from their foreign industrial and economic holdings, from their military installations, as well as from their allies, by oceans and by other countries which range in attitude from neutral to hostile. Inevitably, communications needs of the USSR and of the western world are quite different.

Another significant factor is that this large and continuous land mass of the Soviet Bloc is under a direct and essentially dictatorial control. Obviously, there are no unresolvable problems insofar as private or separate interests are concerned.

*What does
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In the community of Western nations, such dictatorial central authority does not exist within any one major country, much less in the international community as a whole.

In the Soviet Bloc, there is already in existence an organization, the O.S.S.*, which coordinates telecommunications problems for the member countries--from Red China to the European satellites--wherein the member countries have the privilege of agreeing with the decisions emanating from Moscow.

From the standpoint of communications, it follows that the USSR has relatively little concern with the international agreements and arrangements that are so important to most of the ITU member countries. The significance of these geographic and political facts can be seen clearly in the USSR Delegation's treatment of all major considerations before this Conference.

Although the purposes and justifications for the existence of an ITU are not of much concern or significance, directly, to the USSR, this does not mean that the Soviets are going to ignore or stay away from the ITU. On the contrary, it is an international organization which has the capacity to provide practical results to Soviet advantage or to the West's disadvantage, as well as afford an opportunity to enhance the USSR's prestige and influence on the international scene. The Soviets pass up no opportunities of this type. Accordingly, they have driven for membership in any and all types of international organizations, because of the excellent forums they provide for the furtherance of Communist purposes.

Patently, the current aura of good will is a more peaceful and happier era vis-a-vis the USSR. It provides a much brighter promise of hope and it is allowing for discussion and interchange. We must be cautious, however, to recognize that there is no evidence of any basic change in Communist objectives of "one world for Communism." It does mean that we, in the U.S., by being very alert to these bright spots and concentrating on them, may be able to cause further modifications in the Communist program.

*O.S.S. - Organization for Cooperation among the Socialist Countries in the Fields of Posts and Communications.

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I. AERONAUTICAL

Formally, the Soviets proposed to abolish the (R) and (CR) designators from a large number of the aeronautical mobile bands. At the first US/USSR meeting on this subject, the Soviets insisted there was no significance to this proposal. Since that meeting, the Soviets have elaborated to say that what they really want is an adjustment of space between (R) and (CR) to accommodate international air routes into and out of the Soviet Union.

Comment:

In this proposal, the Soviets are motivated by a positive constructive interest of their own. Unlike all other significant problems raised thus far, harassment of the West is not believed to be the motivating factor. It serves a dual purpose, however, in that provision for additional civil routes would be made at the expense of the West's long range CR needs.

Discussion:

The USSR has become cognizant of the significance of civil aviation as an element of national power and prestige and is developing a growing capability to challenge US leadership in this field.

The entire Soviet air system is in the first phase of a comprehensive, modernization program which is calculated to thrust the USSR to the forefront of world commercial aviation. The requirements of AEROFLOT for modern aircraft are no longer being deferred. The TU-104, a fast jet transport manufactured without regard to efficient operation, was rushed into service during 1956 in a successful effort to enhance Soviet prestige. Other heavy jet and turbo-prop aircraft, now in the prototype or testing phases of development, are soon to be employed on domestic and international routes. Major Soviet airports are being enlarged, and modern navigation and landing aids are being installed to meet the increased requirements of high-speed aircraft.

The 1957, civil air passenger traffic increased 67% over 1956. By 1960 air passenger traffic in the USSR is expected to increase five times over 1955. If the planned rate of expansion through 1960 is maintained thereafter, AEROFLOT may be carrying more passengers than US airlines by about 1965.

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At present, about 5% of the Soviet air system lies outside the USSR, while approximately 60% of the air networks of US carriers is accounted for by international routes. Overtures of the USSR in various parts of the globe reflect a comprehensive international expansion program calculated in time to place AEROFLOT among the leading airlines of the world. Success seems assured if the USSR maintains its current facade of international affability.

Ridiculous

Of particular significance is the apparent Soviet intention to establish air service to the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and ultimately Latin America. By virtue of the USSR's geographic position astride the shortest great circle route between Europe and the Far East, AEROFLOT will be a strong contender, also, for traffic between those areas. It is becoming increasingly evident that AEROFLOT also is being developed as a political instrument of the Soviet policy of global competition with the Free World.

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II. SPACE EXPLORATION

While the USSR has not included in its proposals provision for allocations for space communications, they have expressed their philosophy on this subject in their resistance to US proposals and the UN recommendation.

This position of the Soviets naturally gives rise to the questions: Why would they oppose the US proposals? What is their purpose? Don't they need such plans and provisions for themselves? What are their arguments against it?

To gain an appreciation of these questions, one must briefly examine the reasons why the US would favor space allocations, and once again, contrast these factors with the unique situation of the USSR.

These proposals are important to the US because the space program envisaged, and already planned by the US, involves the launching of a rather large number of vehicles in the relatively near future. As an integral part of this program, the US plans to have observation stations scattered strategically around the world. The frequencies and locations involved are such that if there are not specifically reserved bands for the US space program it will be subject to interference from a number of other countries.

Conversely, a look at the USSR and its space program, brings one to the realization that the USSR neither has, nor expects to have, installations for their space program anywhere outside of the same land mass which is already controlled from Moscow. Obviously then, international agreement and special international allocation have little, if any, significance for them. The absence of such allocations, if they can succeed in defeating the proposal, would have the advantage, from their standpoint, of retarding the US program.

To achieve the objective of defeating the proposal, they have apparently chosen to use the argument that such planning is premature. They may use the argument with the smaller countries that there is no point in pre-empting these bands, solely for space exploration at the possible expense of insufficient spectrum space for other purposes for these same countries.

The US plan to offer full cooperation to other countries in the form of acquiring and interpreting the data from US satellites should be an effective counter to any such argument.

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At the same time, we should be alerted to the possibility that the USSR may have chosen the "premature" argument in the hope that the US will release technical data concerning the status of its program in an effort to defend ourselves against the "premature" accusation. An effective counter to this approach may be to take the initiative away from the Soviets and start our own campaign, implying that they must be somewhat backward in their space program if they consider such planning premature. Because of their great pride in their "rockets" they may be goaded into boasting of plans and developments.

The original impact of the Soviet "sputniks" and their current lunar probe can, perhaps, be discredited to some extent in these arguments as simply constituting grandstand plays, with emphasis on timing achieved by gargantuan efforts, straining their entire resources on a few spectaculars, rather than being indicative of any large-scale, systematic, forward-looking program.

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